

April 3, 2023

Dear Dr Marik,

I am writing with an update to our inquiries and conclusions related to the article, "Hydrocortisone, Vitamin C, and Thiamine for the Treatment of Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock: A Retrospective Before-After Study" (*CHEST*. 2017;151(6):1229-1238), for which you are the first author.

To summarize, following our publication policies, the Committee on Publication Ethics' ethical framework, and our publisher's ethical guidance, we investigated an allegation submitted about your study. During the process, new information emerged concerning the selection of study subjects. We sought input from you and the institution where the study was conducted. The detail provided proved insufficient to confirm or entirely refute all elements of the specific concern identified.

We have determined an Editor's Note and correction to the article are necessary to ensure clarity in the published record regarding the selection of study participants. It is our responsibility to disclose the allegations and process undertaken to investigate them. Based on our findings, we are obliged to ensure the accuracy of detail in the original article to the best of our ability. For full transparency, we have attached a pre-publication preview of the Editor's Note as it will appear in a forthcoming issue of *CHEST*.

Thank you for your compliance with our efforts to ensure that the content we publish is as accurate as possible.

Sincerely,



Peter J. Mazzone MD, MPH
Editor in Chief, *CHEST*

Editor's Note

CHEST received a letter in March 2022 which raised ethical concerns regarding the publication, "Hydrocortisone, Vitamin C, and Thiamine for the Treatment of Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock: A Retrospective Before-After Study" (*CHEST* 2017;151(6):1229-1238).

Journal policies obligate us to investigate ethical allegations that are brought to the Editor's attention, and we do so in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

In the subsequent months, *CHEST* has completed a review of the allegations in accordance with COPE's ethical framework and our publisher's ethical guidance. We also sought additional review of the statistical methods of the study. We were unable to confirm the ethical concerns that were raised.

Our process did lead to the identification of an additional question concerning the selection of study subjects. We again followed the aforementioned processes. This evaluation was not able to confirm nor fully refute the concern that was identified.

Based on the best information available to us we have chosen to publish a clarification to the enrollment processes and treatment received. The erratum includes changes to the text in 2 locations within the methods section. We have changed "Between January 2016 and July 2016, *consecutive* patients ..." to "Between January 2016 and July 2016, *non-consecutive* patients ..."; and "... were treated with intravenous vitamin C (1.5g every 6 h for 4 days or until ICU discharge), ..." to "... were treated with intravenous vitamin C (*target of* 1.5 g every 6 h for 4 days or until ICU discharge), ...".

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this discourse. We are grateful for your contribution and dedication to ensuring the integrity of the scientific record.